



**Connecticut Farm Bureau Association**

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**Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association the following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.**

**Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis and members of the Environment Committee,**

**Testimony relating to:**

**S.B. No. 357 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF THE SHELLFISH INDUSTRY.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports efforts by state and federal agencies to develop and maximize aquaculture in Connecticut. We generally support the concept outlined in Section 1 of the Bill but as an alternative, we recommend the establishment of a Shellfish Regulation Board modeled after the existing Milk Regulation Board. Like the Milk Regulation Board, we believe the board should be administered within the Department of Agriculture with the Commissioner serving as chairperson of the board with the responsibility of enforcing the regulations established by the board and administer any other duties prescribed by the board. The Connecticut Farm Bureau does not have policy relating to Section 2. of the Bill.

**S.B. No. 360 AN ACT AUTHORIZING HERD SHARES WITHIN THE PRODUCTION OF MILK AND RAW MILK PRODUCTS AND THE MANUFACTURE OF CHEESE FOR PERSONAL CONSUMPTION.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau does not have policy either favoring or opposing herd shares. We do however recognize that the issue needs to be carefully evaluated to determine if the current exemption for the production of milk, milk products, raw milk or raw milk cheese for personal consumption or for immediate family members should be extended to multiple parties who are subject to a shared animal ownership agreement. We therefore recommend the Bill be amended to refer this matter to the Milk Regulation Board to analyze and make recommendations to the Environment Committee as to the appropriateness of authorizing herd shares as outlined in this Bill.

**H.B. No. 5720 AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DOUBLE THE CAPACITY FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING AND TO ESTABLISH A SITE FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING EAST OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau has policy supporting the establishment of adequate aquaculture inspection procedures but does not call for a specific number of shellfish sample testing facilities or the location of such facilities. As such we recommend that this Bill be amended to require that a study be conducted by representatives from the aquaculture industry, Department of Agriculture Aquaculture Bureau and the University of Connecticut to review the capacity and location of the current shellfish sample testing

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facilities. The findings should be submitted to the Environment Committee and should also include recommendations as to how to improve the system of shellfish sample testing that will ensure shellfish safety for consumers and support the growth of the Connecticut aquaculture industry.

**H.B. 5722 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF CERTAIN OYSTERS THAT ARE TWO AND ONE-HALF INCHES IN LENGTH.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports HB 5722. CFBA has policy that supports allowing oysters grown in hatchery conditions which are produced in a controlled environment and kept separate from the wild set populations (cages) to be harvested at any size.

**H.B. No. 6034 AN ACT AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON CERTAIN PRIVATE PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS.**

Wildlife crop damage continues to be a serious problem facing Connecticut agriculture. The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports HB 6034 and although this bill restricts Sunday hunting to bow and arrow, we would also support expansion of Sunday hunting to include the use of other approved hunting methods.

**H.B. No. 6618 AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRESHOLD FOR LABELING WINE AS “CONNECTICUT-GROWN”.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau opposes HB 6618 as we think this Bill will dilute the “CT Grown” brand by allowing only 25% of the grapes used to make wine to actually be grown in CT. Under current law in order to get a CT Farm Winery license wine makers only need to meet the 25% threshold but they cannot call their wine CT Grown with only 25% of the grapes coming from Connecticut. We think that is appropriate. Consumers have an expectation when they see the “CT Grown” label that the product was in fact grown in CT. HB 6618 would allow for an erosion in consumer trust that could impact the acceptance of the “CT Grown” brand across all aspects of CT agriculture. Furthermore, Federal law through the Alcohol Tax and Trade Bureau dictates what wine makers can and cannot put on their label. This Bill would allow for labeling in CT that would not be in compliance with Federal labeling laws. Therefore, the Connecticut Farm Bureau encourages the defeat of HB 6618.

**H.B. No. 7010 AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL STATUTES RELATING TO AQUACULTURE.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports HB 7010 as it merely extends existing penalties for the stealing of oysters and the damage of oyster enclosures to all shellfish.